

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A portable communication device for facilitating group communications relating to predefined discussion topics between a user and one or more participants, the portable communication device comprising:
 - a full-duplex transceiver, the transceiver sending and receiving signals on one of a plurality of channels, each of the channels corresponding to a predefined discussion topic; and
 - a channel selector operatively coupled to the transceiver for selecting a particular one of the transceiver channels and a corresponding discussion topic.
 2. The portable communication device of claim 1, wherein the transceiver further comprises at least one user-definable channel, the user-definable channel being assigned to a particular discussion topic by the user.
 3. The portable communication device of claim 1, further comprising a processor operative to at least partially control one or more functions of the portable communication device.
 4. The portable communication device of claim 3, further comprising a display operatively coupled to the processor, the display visually indicating at least one of: (i) a selected channel; (ii) a corresponding discussion topic assigned to the selected channel; and (iii) a number of users participating in the selected discussion topic.
 5. The portable communication device of claim 1, further comprising voice recognition circuitry operatively coupled to the transceiver, the voice recognition circuitry being responsive to one or more audio input signals and at least partially controlling the transceiver for transmitting the audio input signals to the one or more participants.
 6. The portable communication device of claim 5, wherein the voice recognition circuitry

is further operative to at least partially control the channel selector in response to the one or more audio input signals.

7. The portable communication device of claim 1, further comprising:

menu circuitry operatively coupled to at least one of the transceiver and the channel selector, the menu circuitry providing an interface for indicating to a present setting of one or more predetermined functions of the portable communication device and for modifying the one or more predetermined functions; and

5 an indicator operatively coupled to the menu circuitry for indicating the one or more predetermined functions of the portable communication device.

8. The portable communication device of claim 1, wherein the transceiver further comprises:

an input for being operatively coupled to a microphone transducer;
an output for being operatively coupled to an earpiece transducer; and
an antenna connection for being operatively coupled to an antenna.

9. The portable communication device of claim 1, further comprising an on-line indicator, the on-line indicator being responsive to at least one of (i) a participant entering a selected channel and (ii) a participant leaving the selected channel, the on-line indicator providing an indication in response thereto.

10. A mobile community communication system for facilitating group communications relating to one or more predefined discussion topics between a plurality of participants, the mobile community communication system comprising:

5 a plurality of mobile communicator units, each of the mobile communicator units including:

a full-duplex transceiver, the transceiver sending and receiving signals on one of a plurality of channels, each of the channels corresponding to a predefined

10 discussion topic; and
a channel selector operatively coupled to the transceiver for selecting a particular one of the transceiver channels and a corresponding discussion topic.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein each of the mobile communicator units further comprise:

at least one user-definable channel, the user-definable channel being assigned to a particular discussion topic by one of the participants.

12. The system of claim 10, wherein each of the mobile communicator units further comprises a processor operative to at least partially control one or more functions of the mobile communicator unit.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein each of the mobile communicator units further comprises a display operatively coupled to the processor, the display visually indicating at least one of: (i) a selected channel; (ii) a corresponding discussion topic assigned to the selected channel; and (iii) a number of users participating in the selected discussion topic.

14. The system of claim 10, wherein each of the mobile communicator units further comprises voice recognition circuitry operatively coupled to the transceiver, the voice recognition circuitry being responsive to one or more audio input signals and at least partially controlling the transceiver for transmitting the audio input signals to the plurality of participants.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the voice recognition circuitry is further operative to at least partially control the channel selector in response to the one or more audio input signals.

16. The system of claim 10, wherein each of the mobile communicator units further comprise:

menu circuitry operatively coupled to at least one of the transceiver and the channel selector, the menu circuitry providing an interface for indicating a present setting of one or more predetermined functions of the portable communication device and for modifying the one or more predetermined functions; and

an indicator operatively coupled to the menu circuitry for indicating the one or more predetermined functions of the mobile communicator unit.

17. The system of claim 10, wherein the transceiver in each mobile communicator unit further comprises:

an input for being operatively coupled to a microphone transducer;

an output for being operatively coupled to an earpiece transducer; and

an antenna connection for being operatively coupled to an antenna.

18. A method of facilitating group communications relating to one or more predefined discussion topics between a user and one or more participants, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of portable communication devices, each of the portable communication devices being capable of transmitting and receiving signals on one of a plurality of channels, each of the channels corresponding to a predefined discussion topic; and

selecting one of the channels on which to initiate a discussion relating to the predefined discussion topic corresponding the selected channel.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of:

at least partially automating one or more portable communication devices in response to at least one of voice communication and sounds.